

# 01 Background



Over the past five years, Lancashire has experienced a reduction in numbers of children (under 18) who go missing from home. Whilst this is good news, we cannot be complacent, due to the risks which young people face whilst missing.

# 02 Why it matters



Children who go missing are vulnerable to abuse and violence, and need to be safeguarded

# 06 Questions to consider

How do we react when children go missing?

Does our reaction depend on age, gender or other factors?

Are there things we could change in our practice in order to reduce the risks of young people going missing?

Are there things we can do youth young people to reduce the risks they face whilst they are missing?

# 03 Information



Children go missing for a number of reasons, but in general, the factors preceding missing episodes are:

- Arguments and conflicts (whether at home or in placement)
- Poor family relationships
- Abuse and neglect
- Boundaries and control

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities
- Involvement in criminal activities
- Becoming a victim of abuse
- Becoming a victim of crime (e.g. sexual assault or exploitation)
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Deterioration of mental/physical health
- Missing out on schooling and education
- Increased vulnerability

Longer term, the risks are similar, with the addition of homelessness and the issues associated with this.



# 07



Are we clear about the expectations of us when children go missing?

Are we clear about the expectations of us when children return?

# What to do

- If you are involved with a child who goes missing, the immediate process is:
- Search the address
  - Contact the child
  - Check with family, associates and known addresses
  - Check hospitals
  - Check social networking sites
  - Ensure the matter is reported to the Police

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